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LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

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Geographical and demographic features

1. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is situated in central North Africa between latitudes 18° and 23° N and longitudes 9° and 25° E. It is bounded on the east by Egypt and the Sudan, on the west by Tunisia and Algeria and in the south by Chad and Niger. It has a southern Mediterranean coastline of about 1,800 km and covers a total area of 1,775,500 km^2, which makes it the fourth largest country in Africa after the Sudan, the Congo and Algeria.

2. Its total population in 1990 was estimated at about 3,947,200 persons.

The general state of the national economy

3. The national economy has achieved tremendous results in various fields by exploiting petroleum resources to implement socio-economic projects in areas relating to agricultural and industrial production, energy and roads, the purpose being to create an economy based on sectors other than petroleum, which is a diminishing and unstable resource.

4. The world economic crisis that began in the early 1980s had a direct impact on petroleum markets, in which prices dropped to a very low level. Marketing policy and the need to maintain prices and establish ceiling production levels inevitably caused a further deterioration. All this had a direct effect on the income of the petroleum-exporting countries, including the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. In 1989, gross domestic product (GDP) at current income factor cost was estimated at about 7,223.5 million Libyan dinars and the available statistics indicate that the contribution of non-petroleum economic activities to GDP rose from 36.9 per cent in 1970 to 72.9 per cent in 1989, at current income factor cost.

5. With a view to achieving balanced economic growth in all sectors and regions and establishing a fundamental development base, the national economy was bolstered by fixed investments that amounted to more than 28,429 dinars during the period from 1970 to 1988.

6. The available statistics indicate that average per capita cash income in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, based on per capita share of GDP, rose from 642 dinars in 1970 to 1,572 dinars in 1989, i.e. an annual compound rate of growth of 4.9 per cent.

7. During the period from 1970 to 1990, GDP at current income factor cost rose from 1,288.3 million dinars in 1970 to about 7,816.8 million dinars in 1990, i.e. an annual compound rate of growth of 9.4 per cent.

8. Average annual development spending, which amounted to about 264 million dinars during the period from 1970 to 1972, rose to 734.3 million dinars under the Development Plan for 1973-1975, to about 1,651.8 million dinars under the Transition Plan for 1976-1980 and to about 2,138.6 million dinars under the Transition Plan for 1981-1985. During the period from 1986 to 1990, average annual expenditure amounted to about 898.3 million dinars.

9. The average per capita share in development spending rose from 376 dinars during the period 1970-1972 to 876 dinars under the Development Plan for 1973-1975, to 2,723 dinars under the Transition Plan for 1976-1980 and to 2,899 dinars under the Transition Plan for 1981-1985. During the period from 1986 to 1990, however, owing to the decline in appropriations and hence in development spending, the average per capita share in development spending was estimated at about 1,038 dinars.

10. The implementation of the transition plans and budgets during the period from 1970 to 1990 led to an increase in GDP at current income factor cost from 1,288.3 million dinars in 1970 to about 7,816.8 million dinars in 1990, i.e. an average annual compound rate of growth of about 9.4 per cent.

11. During the same period, total output deriving from non-petroleum economic activities rose from 475.7 million dinars in 1970 to about 5,566.7 million dinars in 1990, i.e. an estimated average annual compound rate of growth of 13.1 per cent.

Average growth of per capita income based on per capita share of GDP
1970-1990

1970:	GDP at current income factor cost:	1,288.3 million dinars
	Total population at mid-year:	2,006,000 persons
	Per capita income:	US$ 2,169
1990:	GDP at current income factor cost:	7,816.8 million dinars
	Total population at mid-year:	3,947,200 persons
	Per capita income:	US$ 5,400

The political and legal systems

12. Following the revolution of 1 September 1969, sovereignty has been exercised by the people in accordance with the Constitutional Declaration of 11 December 1969, article 1 of which stipulates that:

> "Libya is a free and democratic Arab republic in which sovereignty is exercised by the people. It forms part of the Arab nation and its aim is the achievement of full Arab unity. Its territory is part of Africa and it is known as the Libyan Arab Republic."

13. However, subsequent to the Declaration, on 12 Rabi I 1397 A.H., corresponding to 2 March 1977, the political system of the Jamahiriya has been based on the "people's authority". Article 2 of the Declaration stipulates that:

> "The Holy Qur'an is the social code in the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, since authority belongs solely to the people, by whom it is exercised through people's congresses, people's committees, trade unions, federations and professional associations (the General People's Congress, the working procedures of which are established by law)."

An outline of the political system, legislative and executive mechanisms and judicial authority in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

14. The political system in the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is based on direct popular democracy in which the masses play their political, economic and social role and take decisions concerning various aspects of public and private life.

15. The concept of direct popular democracy is based on the twin pillars of people's congresses and people's committees. The people's congresses embody the sovereign decision-making authority, since sovereignty belongs to the people who exercise it through the people's congresses. Executive authority is exercised by the people's committees.

16. The people as a whole take decisions through the people's congresses. The people also appoint the people's committees, which are the instruments responsible for implementation of the decisions taken by the people's congresses. The principle applied in the Jamahiri system (a system of direct popular democracy in which authority belongs to the people) is that the people's congresses take the decisions, which are implemented by the people's committees which are accountable to the congresses. Under the concept of direct popular democracy, the effective exercise of authority means that the people controls itself. It also means that there is no intermediary between political reality, consisting in authority, and social reality, consisting in the masses of the people.

17. At the basic people's congresses, the people take decisions on foreign policy, planning, the economy, education, health, defence, industry and justice and also promulgate legislation and appoint a people's committee to implement the decisions taken in each of those fields.

The legislative machinery

18. In keeping with this concept, legislative authority under the system of the people's authority is exercised by the basic people's congresses, which constitute the instrument by which laws are promulgated, amended or rescinded. The basic people's congresses have authority to promulgate legislation, whenever needed, to regulate any aspect of public or private activity.

The mechanism of collective participation in legislation

19. Whenever legislation is needed to regulate a particular field of social life, the popular masses participating in the people's congresses and assemblies raise and debate the issue on their own initiative. Their debates determine the broad outline and objective of the legislation and a summary of their conclusions is then referred to the people's committees of the Secretariat for Justice which, through its competent department, draws up a bill of law for submission at the next regular session of the people's congresses, which debate the text of the bill, any part of which they may amend or reject. When the text of the bill has been finalized and approved by the congresses, it is submitted, together with their recommendations, to the General People's Congress which, after considering all the opinions and amendments, promulgates the bill, which enters into force on the date of publication in the Official Gazette.

20. As an alternative procedure, the General People's Committee or the other secretariats, each within its particular field of jurisdiction, may submit a bill of law to the next session of the people's congresses, which discuss the bill and make any necessary amendments or reject it and send it back, with comments, to the competent people's committee so that it can be resubmitted to the congresses after any shortcomings have been rectified. In the event of the bill being approved, it is referred, together with any comments or amendments, to the General People's Congress. The latter, being the general forum in which the congresses, people's committees, trade unions and professional associations meet, acts as an expanded general drafting committee to finalize the bill, which enters into force, following its promulgation by the General People's Congress, on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

21. The mechanism of collective participation by the people in the promulgation of legislation is therefore a two-track process in which the people's congresses can either take the initiative or discuss bills of law submitted by the General People's Committee or the people's committees of the various secretariats. In both cases, this participation makes the people's congresses the sole legislative bodies in society. In actual fact, this is an expression of the sovereignty of the people, which is exercised through the people's congresses and assemblies.

The executive authority

22. This comprises all the activities of government agencies in the system of the people's authority and consists of the Secretariats for Justice, Health, Foreign Affairs, Planning, the Economy, the Treasury, Communications, Education, Petroleum, Defence, etc. These activities are undertaken by people's committees, appointed directly by the masses in the people's

congresses, which implement the decisions of the people's congresses in each of the above-mentioned fields. The people's committees report directly to the congresses in accordance with the principle of people's congresses, which take decisions, and people's committees, which implement those decisions and are themselves accountable to the congresses. This is the essence of direct popular democracy, as applied in Libya.

The judicial authority

23. This is exercised by the judicial machinery, consisting of the courts, the Department of Public Prosecutions and ancillary bodies staffed by criminal investigation officers.

24. The courts in Libya are of four types: civil courts, criminal courts, administrative courts and personal status courts (which apply Islamic law).

25. The Supreme Court, which is the highest judicial authority in the legal system, hears appeals brought before it in connection with civil, criminal, administrative and personal status judgements handed down by the highest courts of the four types.